

## **BBF LEADER CALLS FOR UNITY AT IBN MEETING**

November 11, 2004 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The following is an excerpt from the sermon by Bill Monroe, president of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, at the founding of the International Baptist Network in October at Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee:

“Ladies and gentlemen, our time is too short to continue on the path that we’ve been going for the past 50 years. ... We are too badly out-numbered, our resources are too limited, our time is too short to continue on the path that we’ve been going for 50 years. ... Now all I can speak for is Bill Monroe. But I can tell you this. I fear standing before God and trying to explain to Him why I wouldn’t join hands with fellow Bible-believing Baptists to reach a world that’s groaning with the lostness of almost 7 billion souls without hope, without God, without Christ and headed for a Devil’s Hell. What am I going to say to my Lord when He said, ‘Why did you get diverted by all that stuff? Why didn’t you try to reach this world for Christ like I asked you to do?’” (quoted from *Calvary Contender*, November 2004).

According to Monroe and other leaders of the Independent Baptist Network, individual believers and churches cannot fulfill the Great Commission unless they network organizationally, and this is both unscriptural and unreasonable.

Monroe pretends that God’s people must make the choice between either uniting to fulfill the Great Commission and thus pleasing the Lord or not uniting and thus not fulfilling the Great Commission and failing the Lord.

No such choice is required. Fundamental Baptist churches have been reaching the unsaved and establishing churches throughout the world and obeying their blessed Lord for 50 years without any help from the International Baptist Network, and they can continue to do so until Jesus comes.

When the church at Antioch obeyed the Holy Spirit and became the first missionary church, it did so without networking with the churches at Jerusalem, Damascus, and Caesarea.

True Christian unity has nothing to do with organizations and associations apart from the church. It is to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). It is to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27). It is to be “likeminded” and “with one mind and

one mouth” to glorify God (Rom. 15:6). The Independent Baptist Network is *not* “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

When two believers or two churches are likeminded, they are in fellowship and unity. To the extent that they are likeminded, to that extent they have true spiritual fellowship and unity.

True Christian unity cannot be organized. In fact, any attempt to organize it is to corrupt it, because human organizations beyond the church require that men bend to the lowest common denominator of faith and thus require at least a certain amount of compromise. In an association of preachers or churches, it is required “for the sake of unity” that men not make an issue of those things on which the group is not in agreement. If some of the men hold to the KJV and its Hebrew and Greek texts by conviction while others hold to the NASV or NIV and accept the critical Greek Text, for example, neither party can make an issue of this particular matter because it would cause disharmony within the association or “network.”

Thus associations actually destroy true Christian unity, which is based on true scriptural likemindedness.

I have wonderful fellowship and unity with brethren throughout the world for the simple reason that we agree on doctrine and practice. I have enjoyed this unity with hundreds of brethren in dozens of churches in 11 different countries just in the last year as I have traveled on preaching engagements.

But I do not have true unity with a large number of the men involved with the IBN, for the simple reason that we do not agree on many important issues. I cannot have sweet spiritual unity with men who use worldly music, who do not care about dress standards, who are moving in the direction of the “Purpose Driven Church,” who believe the critical Greek text and the modern versions are fine, who yoke together in ecumenical associations such as Promise Keepers and Billy Graham crusades (such as Jerry Prevo and many other BBF men do). It is equally evident that those involved in such things cannot have sweet spiritual unity with men like me who have strong convictions against such things.

This is for the simple reason that two cannot walk together “except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3).

How can the Independent Baptist Network produce true Scriptural unity under such conditions? It is impossible.

I have no doubt that many of the men involved in this endeavor are sincere in their desire to please the Lord, but sincere men can be wrong. I am convinced that the Independent

Baptist Network is an unscriptural monstrosity that will result in greater compromise among fundamental Baptists.

Brethren, let's be content to follow the scriptural plan for the fulfillment of the Great Commission and not rush after the crowd that claims to have a better idea. If it is newer than 2,000 years old, it is probably not a good plan!

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

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